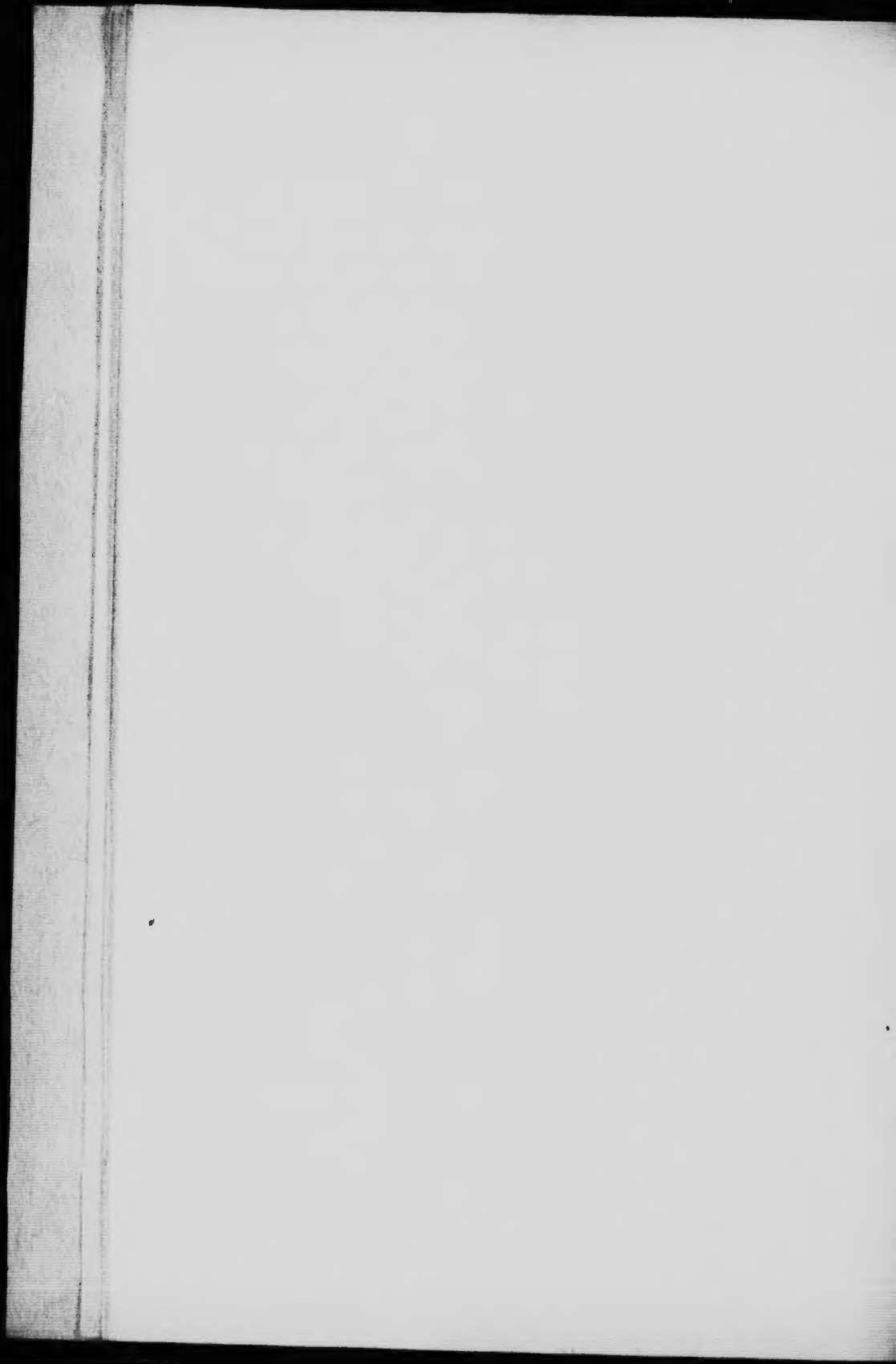




NEW WORLD LYRICS AND BALLADS



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New World Lyrics and Ballads

BY

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

TORONTO
MORANG & CO., LIMITED

1905

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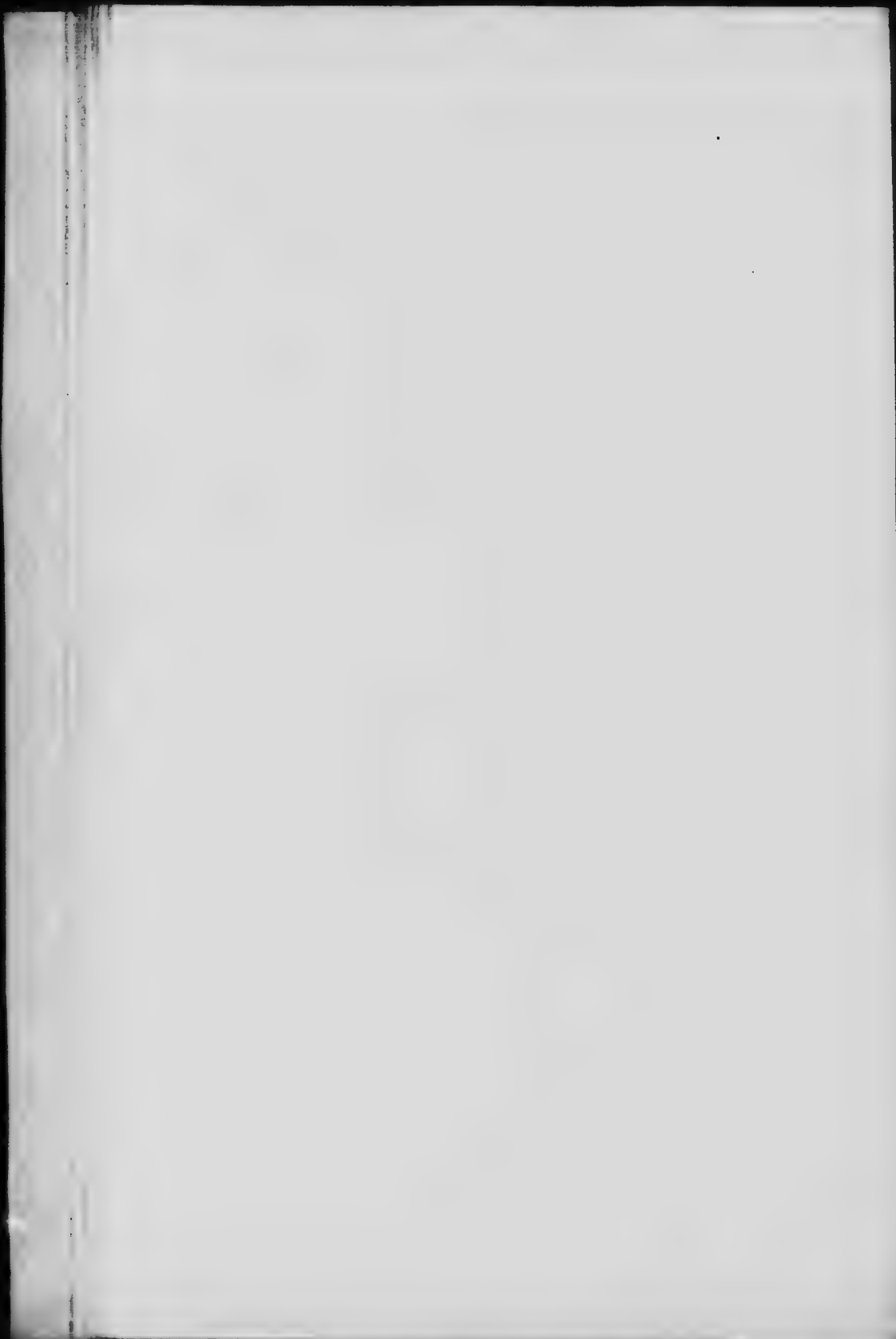
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THE SEA BY THE WOOD

*I dwell in the sea that is wild and deep,
But afar in a shadow still,
I can see the trees that gather and sleep
In the wood upon the hill.*

*The deeps are green as an emerald's face,
The caves are crystal calm,
But I wish the sea were a little trace
Of moisture in God's palm.*

*The waves are weary of hiding pearls,
Are aweary of smothering gold,
They would all be air that sweeps and swirls
In the branches manifold.*

*They are weary of laving the seaman's eyes -
With their passion prayer unsaid,
They are weary of sobs and the sudden sighs
And movements of the dead.*

*All the sea is haunted with human lips
Ashen and sere and gray,
You can hear the sails of the sunken ships
Stir and shiver and sway,*

*In the weary solitude;
If mine were the will of God, the main
Should melt away in the rustling wood
Like a mist that follows the rain.*

*But I dwell in the sea that is wild and deep
And afar in the shadow still,
I can see the trees that gather and sleep
In the wood upon the hill.*

ON THE WAY TO THE MISSION

They dogged him all one afternoon,
Through the bright snow,
Two whitemen servants of greed;
He knew that they were there,
But he turned not his head;
He was an Indian trapper;
He planted his snow-shoes firmly,
He dragged the long toboggan
Without rest.

The three figures drifted
Like shadows in the mind of a seer;
The snow-shoes were whisperers
On the threshold of awe;
The toboggan made the sound of wings,
A wood-pigeon sloping to her nest.

The Indian's face was calm.
He strode with the sorrow of fore-knowledge,
But his eyes were jewels of content
Set in circles of peace.

They would have shot him;
But momentarily in the deep forest,
They saw something flit by his side:
Their hearts stopped with fear.
Then the moon rose.
They would have left him to the spirit,

But they saw the long toboggan
Rounded well with furs,
With many a silver fox-skin,
With the pelts of mink and of otter.
They were the servants of greed;
When the moon grew brighter
And the spruces were dark with sleep,
They shot him.
When he fell on a shield of moonlight
One of his arms clung to his burden;
The snow was not melted:
The spirit passed away.

Then the servants of greed
Tore off the cover to count their gains;
They shuddered away into the shadows,
Hearing each the loud heart of the other.
Silence was born.

There in the tender moonlight,
As sweet as they were in life,
Glimmered the ivory features,
Of the Indian's wife.

In the manner of Montagnais women
Her hair was rolled with braid;
Under her waxen fingers
A crucifix was laid.

He was drawing her down to the Mission,
To bury her there in spring,
When the bloodroot comes and the windflower
To silver everything.

But as a gift of plunder
Side by side were they laid,
The moon went on to her setting
And covered them with shade.

TWIN-FLOWERS ON THE PORTAGE

They cover in a twinkling host
The mosses, green and yellow,
One flower would be Titania's boast
Without her lovely fellow.

But linked in fragile twos they droop
Where'er the vines may wander,
Above the hidden loop in loop
They seem to drowse and ponder.

If form might wake in sound, these cones
Would haunt the dewy hollow
With tabors taut and golden drones,
With dancing flutes to follow.

If odours risen from orient wells
Might don a sea apparel,
The blooms would beam as rosy shells
Beneath a flood of beryl.

If thought might form in flowers, these lights
Would be the gentle seeming
That virgin fairies bend on knights
When they are half adreaming.

Where on the portage now they droop
In tint and odour mellow
One flower would grace Titania's troop
Without her lovely fellow.

THE MISSION OF THE TREES

Years ago one cruel winter
So the story-makers say,
Were fifteen Ojibeway lodges
Starving at Negodina.

They had wandered for the hunting
To their wild ancestral wood,
Left the Mission in the hollow
Quiet in the solitude.

Now in famine there were faithful
Only two of all the pack,
Mizigun, the mighty hunter,
And his dear son, Matenack.

Then the pagans cried in anger,
These two Christians bring our woe,
Let us kill them and their spirits,
They are turning Wendigo.

Mizigun laughed out in scorning
When he heard their babble wild;
But he went apart and pondered,
He was grieving for his child.

Matenack was shrunk with hunger
And a sickness on him fell;
"I will not be better, father,
Till I hear the chapel bell

And the voice of Father Fafard
At the Mission of the Trees."
Then brave Mizigun was thoughtful,
Then he bent his mighty knees,

Wrapped the boy in his rabbit-blanket,
Filled a sack with shredded meat,
Drew his capôt round his forehead,
Bound the snow-shoes to his feet,

Bore him from the camp at sunrise,
When the east was all aglow,
Bore him softly down the lakeshore,
Tracking through the rosy snow.

Colder grew the wind and colder,
Over ridges came the cloud,
And a storm blew up with anger
And the air was like a shroud.

Then the snow was flung and hurtled,
Stinging like a swarm of bees;
Then he breathed the flakes like vapour
And the drift broke at his knees;

The dense cold came through his nostrils
With the ardent touch of fire;
Mizigun was faint for slumber
Kept awake by one desire,

Just to see the little Mission,
With the chapel in its calm,
Like a jewel held and guarded
In the hollow of the palm.

Matenack was growing weaker,
His short breath would hardly come;
"Don't you hear the bell-note, father?"
Mizigun was stricken dumb.

"I can hear it." Surely, never
Bell-note sounded so forlorn,
Like a plover in the clearing,
When the frost is in the corn.

"Don't you hear the bell, dear father?
Turn and answer, bend your head."
Mizigun grew faint and shuddered,
Matenack was fallen dead.

No more would he snare the rabbits,
Nor for whitefish float the net,
Never would he see the chapel,
In the birchen hollow set.

Mizigun bore his darling body,
Down the shifting, hopeless track,
With the cloud of snow before him,
And the storm-wind at his back.

Then he prayed that he might only
See the Mission of the Trees
Once, before his heart was silent
And sore-straightened grew his knees;

Then the cloud was spent at midnight
And the world so gleamed with snow,
That the frosty moon looked downward
On a moon that glowed below.

Mizigun paused, chill and weary.
High above a birchen dell,
His tired heart beat wild and happy,
For he dreamed he knew it well.

Yes, he knew the little chapel
Shining like a silver stone
In the hollow of the birches,
And he heard the mellow tone

Of the vesper bell, swung slowly,
Sounding keenly with the frost,
Three times three, the mystic warning
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Matenack he took up gently
And he closed him to his breast,
"I am very weary, weary,
For a little I must rest,

Then we'll go to Father Fafard."
Still he heard the calling bell,
And he saw the shining chapel;
Then a stupor on him fell,

The whole vision shrank and dwindled
Into something eerie, wan,
The clear bell chirped like a cricket,
And the church was tiny drawn,

Small as any veined agate
Gathered on the island shore,
Then the vision faltered, fluttered,
Vanished, and he knew no more.

Matenack was gone for ever
From his nets and rabbit-snares,
Mizigun had left his province
To the otters and the bears.

But the hollow in the birches,
So the story-makers tell,
Ever after moves and trembles
Haunted by a silver bell.

Oft when June is lush and stilly
And the moon is o'er the glade,
Angelique awaits her lover
Hidden in the cedar shade;

Then instead of Toma's footstep
Clear she hears the bell-note break,
Back she rustles to the wigwams,
Clustered by the moon-lit lake.

In the wild October evenings,
With vast voice and inward hum,
When the dead leaves in the forest,
Gather up, and swirling come

To the hollow in the birches,
Where the wind drops them at rest,
And they cover slope and barrow,
Like the lining of a nest,

Then the weary partridge-hunter
Hears amid the rustling hush,
One, two, three, the triple tonguing,
Mellow as a calling thrush.

On clear eves in rud December,
The lone trapper on the hills,
As he skirts the haunted hollow
Where the smouldering shadow fills,

Hears above his creaking snow-shoes,
And the clinking of his traps,
The sweet sound as clear as silver
Through the silence that enwraps.

Then he strives to hold his heart beats,
Like a figure carved in frost ;—
Three times three the mellow utterance,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

With a murmur to the Virgin
He strides through the frosty gloom,
Till he lines the snow with balsam
And sleeps in his starry room.

So forever lives the legend
Moulded as a people wills ;
The wraith chapel in the hollow
Is as real as the hills.

PEACE

Give me the peace for which I seek
From ocean, vale and hill;
The peace that shines from the sea and the pines,
The peace that is white and still.

The peace mount-still and crystal-white,
In which all things have part;
It dwells for aye in the earth and the sky,
But never long in my heart.

I breathe in towns or uplands lone,
I hold a grail-like quest;
It flows in power one nameless hour,
Then I have rest, dear God, then I have rest.

THE FORSAKEN

I

Once in the winter,
Out on a lake
In the heart of the north-land,
Far from the Fort
And far from the hunters,
A Chippewa woman
With her sick baby,
Crouched in the last hours
Of a great storm.
Frozen and hungry,
She fished through the ice
With a line of the twisted
Bark of the cedar,
And a rabbit-bone hook
Polished and barbed;
Fished with the bare hook
All through the wild day,
Fished and caught nothing;
While the young chieftain
Tugged at her breasts,
Or slept in the lacings
Of the warm *tikanagan*.
All the lake-surface
Streamed with the hissing
Of millions of iceflakes,
Hurled by the wind;

Behind her the round
Of a lonely island
Roared like a fire
With the voice of the storm
In the deeps of the cedars.
Valiant, unshaken,
She took of her own flesh,
Baited the fish-hook,
Drew in a gray-trout,
Drew in his fellow,
Heaped them beside her,
Dead in the snow.
Valiant, unshaken,
She faced the long distance,
Wolf-haunted and lonely,
Sure of her goal
And the life of her dear one;
Tramped for two days,
On the third in the morning,
Saw the strong bulk
Of the Fort by the river,
Saw the wood-smoke
Hang soft in the spruces,
Heard the keen yelp
Of the ravenous huskies
Fighting for whitefish:
Then she had rest.

II

Years and years after,
When she was old and withered,
When her son was an old man
And his children filled with vigour,

They came in their northern tour on the verge of winter,
To an island in a lonely lake.
There one night they camped, and on the morrow
Gathered their kettles and birch-bark
Their rabbit-skin robes and their mink-traps,
Launched their canoes and slunk away through the islands,
Left her alone forever,
Without a word of farewell,
Because she was old and useless,
Like a paddle broken and warped,
Or a pole that was splintered.
Then, without a sigh,
Valiant, unshaken,
She smoothed her dark locks under her kerchief,
Composed her shawl in state,
Then folded her hands ridged with sinews and corded
with veins,
Folded them across her breasts spent with the nourishing
of children,
Gazed at the sky past the tops of the cedars,
Saw two spangled nights arise out of the twilight,
Saw two days go by filled with the tranquil sunshine,
Saw, without pain, or dread, or even a moment of longing:
Then on the third great night there came thronging and
thronging
Millions of snowflakes out of a windless cloud;
They covered her close with a beautiful crystal shroud,
Covered her deep and silent.
But in the frost of the dawn,
Up from the life below,
Rose a column of breath
Through a tiny cleft in the snow,
Fragile, delicately drawn,

Wavering with its own weakness,
In the wilderness a sign of the spirit,
Persisting still in the sight of the sun
Till day was done.

Then all light was gathered up by the hand of God and
hid in His breast,

Then there was born a silence deeper than silence,
Then she had rest.

ROSES ON THE PORTAGE

Roses—roses—roses—

How you glow and burn and beam,
Like lamps in the cave of spruces,
That tremble and dance and gleam.

You bloom unheeded, unbidden,
The Indians pass you by,
Wild Toma and ancient Pierrish,
Arcange with the gypsy eye.

You might catch in their dusky raiment,
Strange with the odour of smoke,
Your dew might be shaken and scattered,
Your petals all riven and broke.

Even then in the spangled morning,
They would not heed a whit,
Your virginal tremulous beauty,
And the innocence of it.

O, if Arcange on the portage,
With her swarthy cheek and breast,
Could know but a tithe of your beauty,
As she pauses there to rest,

Would she pluck you, and hold you, and kiss you,
Would she laugh as your loveliness clears,
Would she stand there awe-stricken, silent,
Would her brown eyes fill with tears?

DOMINIQUE DE GOURGUES

FOREWORD

The story will be found in Parkman's "Pioneers of France in the New World." Dominique de Gourgues, a nobleman of France, resolved to revenge the atrocities perpetrated by Menendez upon the Huguenot settlement planted by Ribaut on the coast of Florida. He set out with the ostensible purpose of hunting slaves in Benin, and the real object of the expedition was not made known to his men until he reached Cape San Antonio in Cuba. There he addressed his followers and fired them with his desire for vengeance; then they utterly destroyed the Spaniards and their forts on the River of May.

I

O listen to a story of the fierce long ago,
How one hot-hearted Frenchman laid many Spaniards low;
He was born a Gascon dagger, and he grew
Where Mont de Marsan glistens by the Douze and the
Maidou;
There he learned to hate the Spanish, as a novice learns
his beads,
With the very love of hating;
There were death and Spaniards mating,
With the blessing of his deeds,
Where'er the might of Spain flaunting glowed.

But they fought him,
And they caught him,
This wolf of Gascony,
Where Siena smoked like sulphur through all one sultry
day.

Then they chained him to the oar,
And wherever water flowed,
He strained him for the Spaniard or the Turk,
And ever more and more,
He loathed them in his freedom and his work,
Till his hate became a wonder,
Taking hold on hell,
Then he gathered up his vengeance in one blasting bolt
of thunder,
And it fell.

II

In August fifteen sixty-seven, there sailed from Charente,
One hundred and eighty rovers whom nothing alive could
daunt,

They had three little sturdy ships the day they sailed away;
They cheered the scud and spindrift and the toss of Biscay
Bay,

They were as gallant lovers as the sea had ever seen,
They went to fight for negro slaves in the wilds of hot
Benin.

Their leader heard their forecast but he dreamed of different wars,

He only talked with his deep soul beneath the quiet stars;
His heart was a nest of tempests, his tongue a ready sword,
But his mind burned bright and steady for the glory of the
Lord,
Dominique de Gourgues.

III

They trimmed their sails and coasted down the rocky shore
of Spain,
And many pleasant sights they saw looking landward
from the main;
Until one day at sunset, like a dragon from his lair,
Sprang a wild and livid tempest off the point of Finisterre;
Their sails were ripped and riven, their timbers scarcely
stood,
They were like three frightened partridge a wolf drives
through the wood,
They called to one another through the bursting of the
foam,
They tried to keep their lanterns lit and each man thought
of home,
Till they tugged at oars in cadence to a sort of rowing
chant,
"There's a safe and merry haven at the mouth of the
Charente."
But they stopped their coward chorus when the dawn
struck full on him,
Silent, proud and grim,
Dominique de Gourgues.

IV

But when the sun was risen a fair wind began to blow,
And they bore away for Africa and the Rio del Oro;
There they paused and gathered heart;
Then they ventured on the leagues of sea that part
The coast from the first islands of the west,
And after many mornings they saw them on the lea,

All lush with tangled verdure and crowned with rosy snow
Uplifted from the sea.

Then like three veering seabirds they dipped from isle to
isle,

Till the coast of Hispaniola gathered in the haze;

Then it made a green horizon, and for many a mile on
mile

They fought with Spain for water down all her ports and
bays.

Even after even when the broad sun went down,

Lurid as the sack and searing of a golden Spanish town,

Where the ashes of the ruins were the cinders of burnt
pearls,

Where the charred hearts of great rubies in the blistered
coffers lay

Heaped like dead rose-leaves in a jar,

They leaned upon the gunwales and wiled the hours away,

With many a marvel-tale of hazard and of war.

Then off the coast of Cuba they lay becalmed for days,

All dizzy in the sun-heat that fell through the dead haze.

Often were they pestered by little lingering gales,

That rippled in the water but hardly swayed their sails,

Often in the moonlight under the low white stars,

They beat the heavy water with their oars,

And saw it break in silver and part in crystal spars

In the shadow of the shores.

Once, for all one day,

They rested in the charmed ring,

Drawn round a haunted bay;

All life a bubble seemed,

A floating, pictured thing,

And each man dreamed:

There in a lucent spring

They found sweet water, and lazily
They filled their casks and jars,
When the great sun dropped hazily,
They waited for the stars,
Before they sailed away:
And on the morrow morning a large wind began to flow,
That lifted them from Corrientes to San Antonio.

V

There, while the ships lay anchored out in the road
He mustered the men on shore;
They formed in a crescent that smouldered and glowed
Like a heap of wind-blown brands on the tawny beach;
Their leader waded in through the shallow reach
Strong and free;
As he strode,
Tufts of sun-fire sprang from his corselet and casque;
He stood with his back to the sea,
And threw off the mask.

"Frenchmen!" he said,
"Thus far have I led:
"I have come your way and that was a lie,
"For I think no more of your slaves than I think to die
"In a palace of Spain on a perfumed bed;
"But I have a sword in my hand, a torch in my head,
"The torch is bright and dry, and the blade is keen;
"Hear me, Frenchmen, I have a fighting name.
"If I lead as I led
"I lead you to glory, to fame,
"But not to Benin."

Aflare was the crowd
Like flame that waxes in wind,
And wanes when the wind goes by;
There was a curse and a cry, ——
"Traitor!" not loud,
But sharp as a dirk rammed down in its sheath,
Or the grind of an arquebuse on the stones beneath.
"That sword," he cried again,
"Is the Host for Spaniards dead;
"That torch that flames in my head
"Is the hate of Spain.
"You ask why——
"You that have fought them from island to island!
"My score began before I was sword-high:
"This breast that is branded deep,
"This cracked wrist set awry,
"This fever that burns my sleep,
"Bred in their curséd ships,
"Under the lashes of whips,
"You ask why!"

Then a voice from the crowd outbroke,
Like flame from smoke,
"What care we for your private wrong?
"Not a song,
"We have come here for gold and for gain,
"As for Spain,——
"As well fight God who struck us with tempests,
"Or the devils of Portuguese,
"Who fought us with negroes at Blanco."
The speech left his mouth as fire leaves a brand,
And he glowed, and on either hand
Two swords leaped out:
"Traitor!" again was the shout.

But he gathered them up with his eye,
And held them like hounds in a leash;
"Those who fight," he said,
"Draw swords in a flash;
"If 'traitor' lives in the head.
"'Tis but a small word for the tongue
"As for my private wrong,
"Let it count as a song
"With what you have suffered for chorus;
"But here there is o'er us
"Sky that saw treachery,
"Sky that saw murder foul,
"Sky that saw ——— Frenchmen!
"You have heard of Menendez,
"The name gives a hiss to the breath;
"François, where is your brother Jean,
"Gaston, where did your father die,
"Mersac, where is young Giradin,
"Where do the sons of Le Simon lie?
"Ask not me,—ask Menendez.
"These were each of them Ribaut's men
"And a hundred more that all of you know
"Slaughtered like lions caught in a pen,
"All of them dead with Ribaut;
"You ask me why they were slain,
"I cry ——— Spain.'"
They sprang to the word as a charger leaps to the spur;
They bit their beards and their lips went wan like ash;
From each man's memory a blur
Rolled, and he saw in a lightning flash
Some face that was lost to fame.
Then up in their cavern-hearts, bitter and salt and free
Dashed the tide of hate from the terrible outer sea,

White with the crests of rage and the weltering hollows of
change.

Then were they ware

How their leader's face grew strange,

How he stretched his dagger aloft in the air

Held by the point.

His eyes were the eyes of a seer

Eager and rapt and solemn,

As he looked up wonderingly

To the cross of his dagger-hilt

And saw a vision go by:

He spake like one in a dream.

"They, who had suffered the seas,

"He, — this Menendez, brother of Hell,——

"Bound with cords;

"The salt was dry in their hair,

"Gaunt were they for meat,

"They stood in the blood from their feet,

"Wild with the hope that kills

"That this stern way was the Lord's:

"He gave them his faith and an oath on the body of God;

"But when they had marched to a lonely place in the hills,

"Where the sunset flood

"Lay red as ghost of blood,

"He had drawn a line in the sand with his cane,

"That his Captains saw with a callous nod:

"There they were slain ——!"

The dagger dropped to the sand;

He wrapped his head with his arms

And shivered low down on the shore,

As if he were cold to the core

With horror.

Slowly the men sank down,

With never a cry or moan,
With only the sound of the sand,
That whispered about their knees;
Awed to the trembling lips,
As if the body of Christ went by
Between the shore and the ships.

Not long did he cower,
Like a bow when the frayed string breaks
He sprang to his height;
Vibrant he seemed to soar.
Glowing with withering ire;
His eyes were beacons of light
Below the great crag of his brows;
Held aloft in the burning air,
Point down, alive with power,
The dagger flashed back their fire.
"Frenchmen," he cried,
"This we avenge,
"Over twelve that he hanged,
"He branded this legend,
"Not as to Frenchmen,
"But as to Lutherans.'
"I too will brand him
"Twelve good Spaniards,
"Hanged with a French rope.
"You that I trusted,
"Will you betray me?
"Gold have I given,
"Now I give blood;
"I, who will lead you,
"Front every danger,

"I have a fighting name,——

"Do you forget it?

"Follow me."

Then a sound went out to the deepest sea,
That startled the sailors aboard the ships
As they dozed by the water-casks in the shade;
They sprang to the anchor-chains and gazed to the land,
Fearing the giants who dwelt in the hills were at hand,
Or a Spanish ambushade.
Astonied they watched the rout
Charge over the margent,
With flashing arquebuses, and poinards and pikes
Brandished, with scarfs leaping like flags as they drave
Down, partizan clashing with glave;
With the leader aloft shoulder-high;
Tossing one name to the sea,
On they came with a triumphing shout;
The water roared gloriously
As they trampled it out,
Tossing one name to the sky;
It was mingled and riven, hurled from a hundred throats,
It fell like a scourge of cords,
Like a dagger driven home,——
Dominique de Gourgues, Dominique de Gourgues.

Deep in the night when the ships had left the lagoon,
And the white sands floated the palm-shadows cast by
the moon,
There came in the silence a sound that shuddered and fell,
Fell and shuddered and beat like an ominous knell

In the plangent wash of the ripple that reached the shore,
The rovers fore-doomed who should home no more,
For mariners buried on highland or land-folk smothered
in sea,

Weary one for the upland, weary one for the sea.

Dominique de Gourgues, Dominique de Gourgues.

VI

Then lo, on a sultry day,

When the Spaniards dozed in their forts on the River of
May,

They heard the wild French shout and the Indian yell:
(Forever the action's done and the tale's to tell.)

Before they could turn to hide, or stand to see,

The foe swept out of the woods and up the glacis,

Stormed the dry moat, right in the cannon's throat,

The Spaniards quailed and fled and crowded the gate;

But they saw too late,

The awful wing of the French wheel round from the wood,

And knew they were caught in the trap, where they stood.

Then a few that were warned at the first alarms

Rushed out from the armory door with pikes in their arms,

Rallied the crowd with the cry "Santiago, Santiago!"

Their blood burst back to their shrunken hearts in full spate,

They broke within and onward and out through the gate,

They stood like lions where they had meant to flee.

The French hurled on and the Indians clouded the rear,

"Santiago" was drowned with "de Gourgues and St.
Denis!"

The pikes clashed down with a roar of hate and a shout of
fear,

And then began a slaughter grisly and great.
But wherever the fight was hottest and the blows were
heavy and dire,
The leader remembered the vow he had made at San Antonio,
And plucked a Spaniard here and a Spaniard there, like
brands from the fire
Until they were twelve in the pines strongly bound in a
row.
They hewed in joy as the wood-man hews on the hill,
And hears the long pines roar down the hollows of dawn;
The Spaniards fought with a terrible venomous will,
Till those that were left were ringed about by the foe;
The glaivemen hacked at the clump like axemen that
girdle an oak,
And whenever a Spaniard went down or the circle broke,
Rose up their waning cry "Santiago, Santiago."
Then the French who had no foe left to slay,
Leaned on their pikes and mocked, like critics who scoff
at a play,
And over the Spaniards alive in the crushing ring
Hung the sneering lips and the ravening eyes,
One after one went down mid the shouts and the taunting
cries,
Till one alone was left in the circle of dead.
He fought with a dirk and uncovered head
And a long Toledo blade.
There at the end of the fight a small truce was made,
And for a moment he stood,
Clouted and marred with blood;
Then he threw up his arms to their topmost height,
Brandished his blades red from the fight,
Drew a hard deep breath, deep and slow,

And with one great cry, "Santiago!"
Clanged down from his loftiest reach on the heap of the
 slain,
The last of fighting Spain.

VII

Down on the lonely solitude
 The moonlight fell from half the sphere;
The shadow from the silvered wood
 Filled half the space and half was clear
 As the moon's self with cloudless light;
 A little smoke stole dead and white,
Across the black and crystal bars
 Cast by the pines from the pure height
 Where the cloud-branches held the stars.

Two only waked while the host dreamed;
 A Spanish lad from Cordova
Bound in the pines, to him it seemed
 That all the magic moonlight lay
 Deep o'er a hamlet on a hill;
 Crisp the wild mule-bells jangled still
At the road-bend where the olives bask;—
 Some soldier restless in the chill,
 His vauntbrace clashing on his casque.
And one whose joy was at full flood
 The ruthless leader of the fray,
Like some old wolf-hound rolled in blood,
 Felt his wounds stiffen where he lay;
 But gloated over God's behest,

Plain from the night of his first quest,
When by a bastion masked with rain
He stabbed a guard, till in the west
He tramped upon the neck of Spain.

VIII

Now when the morn was come and the fires were aglow,
He gathered the handful left of the foe;
They stood 'neath the pines in the air and the sun,
Each with his corselet and grieves and morion,
No man asked his life with a craven breath,
Twelve good friends with death!
He preached them a sermon on Fate and Law,
Told them of heaven for true men and traitors for hell,
Then he hanged them well,
With a rope that was twisted in Oleron.
They heated a pike red hot in the coals of the fort,
And burned deep down on a slab of pine,
This legend, trenched in remembrance, line upon line:
"Not as to Spaniards, but as to Murderers, Traitors and
Rogues."
They swung it above the men who had met in the trees,
Left them to turn in the idle breeze,
And then by the sea where the river disembogues,
They clambered into the ships with a cry and a cheer;
Then watched the Indians fade, the coast-line dwindle,
the forest disappear.
But once before they sank in the sea
A mirage swept them on wings of faery,
Back to the low, long shore;
The Indians saw once more

The wind break out the rippling pennon of France,
The sailors haul the sheet and the soldiers dance,
The surgeons cool the wounds in the shade of the sail,
The armourers turn the dint in the battered mail,
And one on the deck with his cloak about him drawn,
Gaze to the west and the mouth of the river of May;
Last of the vision he lingered, and faded away,
And forever was gone.

IX

Still his name
And his fame,
Ring with the sound of terror and the shout of desperate
hordes;
Still his memory lifts and fills,
Like a wind that soars and streams above a torrent in the
hills,
Where two hosts clash in slaughter,
Now it chokes with strangled water,
Now it gluts the iron gorges with the sound of shattered
swords,
Dominique de Gourgues!

INDIAN PLACE-NAMES

The race has waned and left but tales of ghosts,
That hover in the world like fading smoke
About the lodges: gone are the dusky folk
That once were cunning with the thong and snare
And mighty with the paddle and the bow;
They lured the silver salmon from his lair,
They drove the buffalo in trampling hosts,
And gambled in the teepees until dawn,
But now their vaunted prowess all is gone,
Gone like a moose track in the April snow.
But all the land is murmurous with the call
Of their wild names that haunt the lovely glens
Where lonely water falls, or where the street
Sounds all day with the tramp of myriad feet;
Toronto triumphs; Winnipeg flows free,
And clangs the iron height where gaunt Quebec
Lies like a lion in a lily bed,
And Restigouche takes the whelmed sound of sea
Meductic falls, and flutes the Mirimichi;
Kiskisink where the shy mallard breeds
Breaks into pearls beneath his whirling wings,
And Manitowapah sings;
They flow like water, or like wind they flow,
Waymoucheeching, loon-haunted Manowan,

Far Mistassini by her frozen wells,
Gold-hued Wayagamac brimming her wooded dells:
Lone Kamouraska, Metepedia,
And Metlakahtla ring a round of bells.

NIGHT HYMNS ON LAKE NEPIGON

Here in the midnight, where the dark mainland and island
Shadows mingle in shadow deeper, profounder,
Sing we the hymns of the churches, while the dead water
Whispers before us.

Thunder is travelling slow on the path of the lightning;
One after one the stars and the beaming planets
Look serene in the lake from the edge of the storm-cloud,
Then have they vanished.

While our canoe, that floats dumb in the bursting thunder,
Gathers her voice in the quiet and thrills and whispers,
Presses her prow in the star-gleam, and all her ripple
Lapses in blackness.

Sing we the sacred ancient hymns of the churches,
Chanted first in old-world nooks of the desert,
While in the wild, pellucid Nepigon reaches
Hunted the savage.

Now have the ages met in the Northern midnight,
And on the lonely, loon-haunted Nepigon reaches
Rises the hymn of triumph and courage and comfort,
Adeste Fideles.

Tones that were fashioned when the faith brooded in
darkness,
Joined with sonorous vowels in the noble Latin,
Now are married with the long-drawn Ojibeway,
Uncouth and mournful.

Soft with the silver drip of the regular paddles
Falling in rhythm, timed with the liquid, plangent
Sounds from the blades where the whirlpools break and
are carried

Down into darkness;

Each long cadence, flying like a dove from her shelter
Deep in the shadow, wheels for a throbbing moment,
Poises in utterance, returning in circles of silver
To nest in the silence.

All wild nature stirs with the infinite, tender
Plaint of a bygone age whose soul is eternal,
Bound in the lonely phrases that thrill and falter
Back into quiet.

Back they falter as the deep storm overtakes them,
Whelms them in splendid hollows of booming thunder,
Wraps them in rain, that, sweeping, breaks and onrushes
Ringing like cymbals.

A NEST OF HEPATICAS

O Passion of the coming of the spring!
When the light love has captured everything,
When all the winter of the year's dry prose
Is rhymed to rapture, rhythmed to the rose,
When all the heart's desire is fondly set
Just to remember never to forget;
O season of the mild and misty eves,
With the deep sky seen through the growing leaves!
Where in the crocus west the evening star
Grows distant from the moon, and sinks afar
As she grows lovelier; when the willow wands
Burst their brown buds in gray and gleaming bands
And score the surface of the amber pool
With little motes of silver beautiful;
When the hepatica, with her flushing crest,
Blooms in the leaves above the secret nest,
Where all her sisters, fairer far than she,
Lie curled in a frail silken galaxy:
Like a young girl's first, timid thought of love
That blossoms in her liquid eyes, above
A nest of hopes so secret and so fair
She hardly knows herself that they are there.

CATNIP JACK

Yes, they call me "Herbe-à-chat Jack!"

You wonder at the name!

Why, sir, I'll tell you the story,

And how the legend came.

I was a sturdy English lad,

I worked in this parish a week,

I liked the French and their homely ways;—

And fortune is fæ to seek.

The countryside was new and wild;

I bade my wandering cease,

For all the wooded virgin land

Was full of lonely peace.

Ah! Then I loved a French lass,

It seems like yesterday,

I saw her first in the beaver-meadow

Gathering in the hay.

Half a dozen of common words

Was all the French I knew;

But the tongue has little to do with love,

If it be deep and true.

She had but one short English word,
For me the best of the pack,
One of my words was Olivine,
Her only word was Jack.

On an August day we walked where the road
Was sheltered from the sun;
Our hearts met where our hands met,
We knew that we were one.

Then we saw at a bend of the road,
Where the sun fell full and strong,
Two men that strained like weary beasts,
When the way is heavy and long.

They cried out hoarsely as they toiled
From the shadow into the glare;
The thing they dragged raised a cloud of dust
In the trembling sunny air.

"Picotte," they cried, "Picotte, Picotte,"
No other word did they say;
They lashed their heads with balaam boughs,
To scare the flies away.

Olivine cried out in fear
And fled deep into the wood,
She called me there like a mating thrush.
But I laughed back and stood.

I did not know the language well,
For I was an English lad,
So I stopped in the way and let them go by
And saw the thing they had.

A body covered with maple boughs
They dragged on a rough stone-boat,
This word they cried as if to try
Which was the hoarsest throat.

The stone-boat growled as it tore the road,
It seemed to understand;
A bit of chain trailed out behind
And worked like a snake in the sand.

Olivine came out of the wood,
Her face was as pale as ash;
They had hardly gone by in the middle road,
When this vision grew in a flash.

She was a haggard, tottering thing
With a flame-like rise and fall,
That first seemed hard as any stone,
Then not to be at all.

"Picotte," she shrieked, and shook her staff,
She was foul to the finger tips.
"Picotte," she shrieked and two black teeth
Fell out from her yellow lips.

She was crowned with a halo of fiery flies
That seemed to take no rest,
So thick she was with filth and mould
A toadstool grew in her breast.

We shrank from the road down into the ditch,
Where the catnip grew rank and tall,
And we crushed it out beneath our feet,
As we struggled not to fall.

We had to look on the shrieking hag
Whether we would or no;
But where the balsams grew at the bend
She vanished,—and we could go.

Olivine held me at arm's length,
Her eyes were as large as a doe's;
I covered her hands to the tender wrists
And felt them as they froze.

"That was old Mother Picotte," she said,
She clung to me and cried;—
Two weeks after she sickened and failed,
Then the fifth day she died.

I was the one who did not know,—
See! I am old and grey:
She was the one who knew and feared,—
She has gone her way.

Catnip! the boys shout after me;
Now I know the language well,
But I thank God in mine own tongue,
For the weed saved me from hell.

For many mortals know not love,
They change as the days go by,
But we were two with but one soul
Olivine and I.

When she died I should have died;
I was going slowly mad,
When I smelt this weed by a heap of stones,
Then something made me glad.

For somehow in its keen wild smell
God sent a thought from above,
How we came to be that dreadful day
Closer in death than in love.

So I gather it up and crush it hard,
I wear it here in my breast;
There is a spirit in weeds, I think,
This one gives me rest.

What is to be must be, they say,
What is past is past,
So I work hard and sleep like the dead,—
I love on to the last.

THE WOOD PEEWEE

He comes in Springtime with the breeze
That shakes the flowering maples,
He builds his nest in greening trees
Where shower and sunshine dapples;
When all the woods are tranced and still,
Amid the virgin leaves
His pensive note he sounds at will,
He grieves.

At dawning when the cool air floats,
When dove-wing tints are streaming,
He, earliest of the early throats,
Begins his song adreaming;
While round his nest still clings the night,
He pipes in wistful flushes,
But when the wind lets in the light,
He hushes.

Yet is his heart with joyance filled
And not with brooding sadness;
If he might utter as he willed
His strain would mount in gladness;

THE WOOD PEEWEE

47

It meaneth joy in simple trust,
Though pensively it rings;
Not as he would but as he must
He sings.

LIFE AND A SOUL

Let it pass like a breath,
Said the soul,
Let it pass like a breath:
What I am / control:
The world is not anything
But a pebble hurled from a sling,
The soul saith
Let it pass like a breath,

For love is naught,
Said the soul,
Love is naught;
Life is a vacant scroll;
The past but seems;
The future is sought
As a drug to charm dreams;
Death is a vaunt—Great Death!
The soul saith.

Then said the Lord,
Let it pass like a breath:
The angel lifted the sword
Of two-edged death,
And there drifted out with a sigh
From the life it had never lived

The soul that can never die,
To wander for aye:
For Life is the first great prize,
The soul that mocks is not wise,
The Lord God saith,
Let it pass like a breath.

DULCE GATHERING

We watched the tide with the current fight,
And the shingle clash before
And the wild floods of fugitive light
Play on the pale south-shore.

We gathered dulce that the sea had cast,
In many a glistening heap;
We bore it back to the farm on the hill
Where the corn and the flax-fields sleep.

There in the loft of an upland barn,
A league from its tossing bed,
It gathered salt and shrivelled with age
To a parchment purple and red.

But still it holds the soul of the tide—
This rag of wizened dulce;
The keen free scent and the tang of the salt
Brings the sea into the pulse.

And memories lone on the heart are hurled,
Like the waves on the shingle flung,
When the sun was young, and young was the world,
When we were young.

THE FORGERS

In the smithy it began:
Let's make something for a man!
Hear the bellows belch and roar,
Splashing light on roof and floor:
From their nest the feathery sparks
Fly like little golden larks:
Hear each forger's taunting yell,
Tell—tell—tell—tell—
Tell us what we make, my master!
Hear the tenor hammers sound,
Ring-a-round, ring-a-round;
Hear the treble hammers sing,
Ding-a-ring, ding-a-ring;
Hear the forger's taunting yell,
Tell—tell—tell—tell!
Though the guess be right or wrong
You must wear it all life long!
How it glows as it grows,
Ding-a-ring-a-derry-down,
Into something—Is't a crown?

Hear them half in death with laughter,
Shaking soot from roof and rafter;
Tell—tell—tell—tell—
Ding-a-ring, ding-a-ring,
See them round the royal thing,
See it fade to ruby rose,
As it glows and grows,

Guess, they shout, for worse or better:
Not a crown!
Is't a fetter?
Hear them shout demonic mirth:
Here's a guesser something worth ;
Make it solid, round, and fine,
Fashioned on a cunning plan,
For the riddle-reader Man ;
Ho—ho—ho—ho !
Hear the bellows heave and blow:
Heat dries up their tears of mirth;
Let the marvel come to birth,
Though his guess be right or wrong
He must wear it all life long !
Sullen flakes of golden fire
Fawn about the dinning choir,
They're a dusky pack of thieves
Shaking rubies from their sleeves,
Hear them wield their vaunting yell,
Tell—tell—tell—tell !
Forging faster—taunting faster—
Guess, my master—Guess, my master !
Grows the enigmatic thing!
Ruddy joyance—Deep disaster?
Ding-a-ring, ding-a-ring,
Ding-a-ring-a-derry-down!
Is't a fetter—I'st a crown?

RAPIDS AT NIGHT

Here at the roots of the mountains,
Between the sombre legions of cedars and tamaracks,
The rapids charge the ravine:
A little light, cast by foam under starlight,
Wavers about the shimmering stems of the birches:
Here rise up the clangorous sounds of battle,
Immense and mournful.
Far above curves the great dome of darkness
Drawn with the limitless lines of the stars and the planets.
Deep at the core of the tumult,
Deeper than all the voices that cry at the surface,
Dwells one fathomless sound,
Under the hiss and cry, the stroke and the plangent clamour.

O human heart that sleeps,
Wild with rushing dreams and deep with sadness!

The abysmal roar drops into almost silence,
While over its sleep play in various cadence
Innumerable voices crashing in laughter;
Then rising calm, overwhelming,
Slow in power,
Rising supreme in utterance,
It sways, and reconquers and floods all the spaces of silence,
One voice, deep with the sadness,
That dwells at the core of all things.

There by a nest in the glimmering birches,
Speaks a thrush as if startled from slumber,
Dreaming of Southern ricefields,
The moted glow of the amber sunlight,
Where the long ripple roves among the reeds.

Above curves the great dome of darkness,
Scored with the limitless lines of the stars and the planets;
Like the strong palm of God,
Veined with the ancient laws,
Holding a human heart that sleeps,
Wild with rushing dreams and deep with the sadness,
That dwells at the core of all things.

AT THE END

I have learned well,—a child I've grown by knowing;
I have taught well,—I know not why;
A few have garnered well my careless sowing,
And one sound kernel fills the granary.

I have fought well,—have turned and dared disaster;
I've been well vanquished —and I know not why;
Well have I suffered and called no man master,
But have wrought sleepless for the mastery.

I have loved well,—and that's the best of living;
I've been well loved,—I know not why;
But O, the rapture of the giving!
And of the taking—the wild ecstasy!

*I boast too well, you say, a noisy scandal
Vexing the hearing of the scornful gods:*
But life,—yes, life was worth the candle,
So what's the odds;

He that cowers now is not the less a varlet,
I know I'll brave them well,—I know not why;
Toss me my proudest cloak of green and scarlet,
Fellows,—old friends,—good bye.

THE BUILDER

When the deep cunning architect
Had the great minster planned,
They worked in faith for twice two hundred years
And reared the building grand;
War came and famine and they did not falter,
But held his line,
And filled the space divine
With carvings meet for the soul's eye;
And not alone the chantry and thereby
The snowy altar,
But in every part
They carved the minster after his own heart,
And made the humblest places fair,
Even the dimmest cloister-way and stair,
With vineyard tendrils,
With ocean-seeming shells,
With filmy weeds from sea,
With bell-flowers delicate and bells,
All done minute with excellent tracery.

Come, O my soul,
And let me build thee like the minster fair,
Deep based and large as air,
And full of hidden graces wrought
In faith and infinite thought,
Till all thy dimmest ways,
Shall gleam with little vines and fruits of praise.
So that one day

The consummate Architect
Who planned the souls that we are set to build,
May pause and say:
How curiously wrought is this!
The builder followed well My chart
And worked for Me, not for the world's wild heart:
Here are the outward virtues, true!
But see how all the inner parts are filled
With singular bliss:
Set it aside
I shall come here again at eventide.

THE HOUSE OF THE BROKEN-HEARTED

It is dark to the outward seeming,
Wherever its walls may rise,
Where the meadows are adreaming,
Under the open skies,
Where at ebb the great world lies,
Dim as a sea uncharted,
Round the house of sorrow,
The house of the broken-hearted.

It is dark in the midst of the city,
Where the world flows deep and strong,
Where the coldest thing is pity,
Where the heart wears out ere long,
Where the plough-share of wrath and of wrong
Trenches a ragged furrow,
Round the house of the broken-hearted,
The house of sorrow.

But while the world goes unheeding
The tenant that holds the lease,
Or fancies him grieving and pleading
For the thing which it calls peace,
There has come what shall never cease
Till there shall come no morrow
To the house of the broken-hearted
The house of sorrow.

There is peace no pleasure can jeopard,
It is so sure and deep,
And there, in the guise of a shepherd,
God doth him keep,
He leads His beloved sleep,
To fold when the day is departed,
In the guise of sorrow
The house of the broken-hearted.

THE WOOD BY THE SEA

*I dwell in the wood that is dark and kind
But afar off tolls the main,
Afar, far off I hear the wind,
And the roving of the rain.*

*The shade is dark as a palmer's hood,
The air with balm is bland:
But I wish the trees that breathe in the wood
Were ashes in God's hand.*

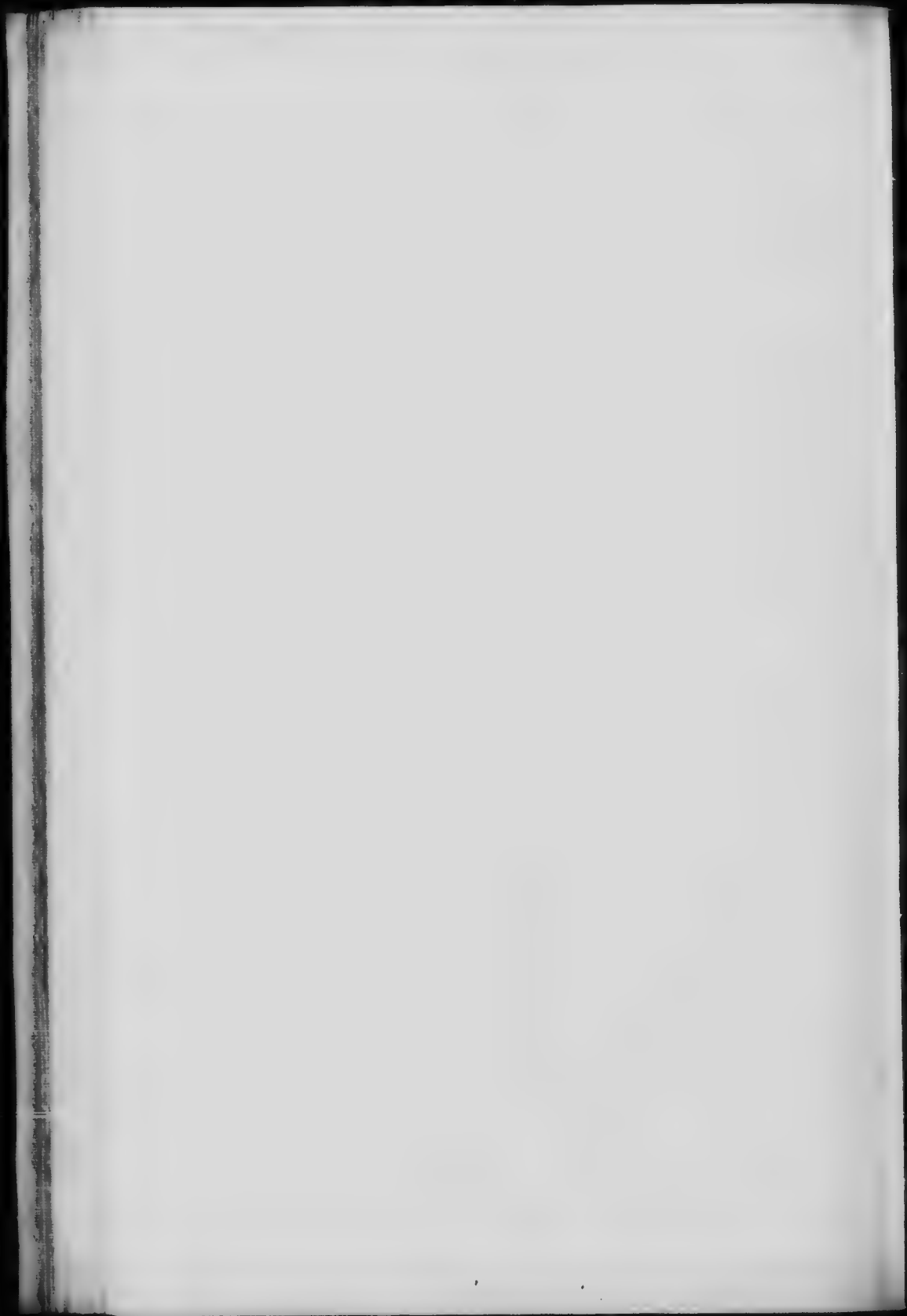
*The pines are weary of holding nests,
Are aweary of casting shade;
Wearily smoulder the resin crests
In the pungent gloom of the glade.*

*Weary are all the birds of sleep,
The nests are weary of wings,
The whole wood yearns to the swaying deep,
The mother of restful things.*

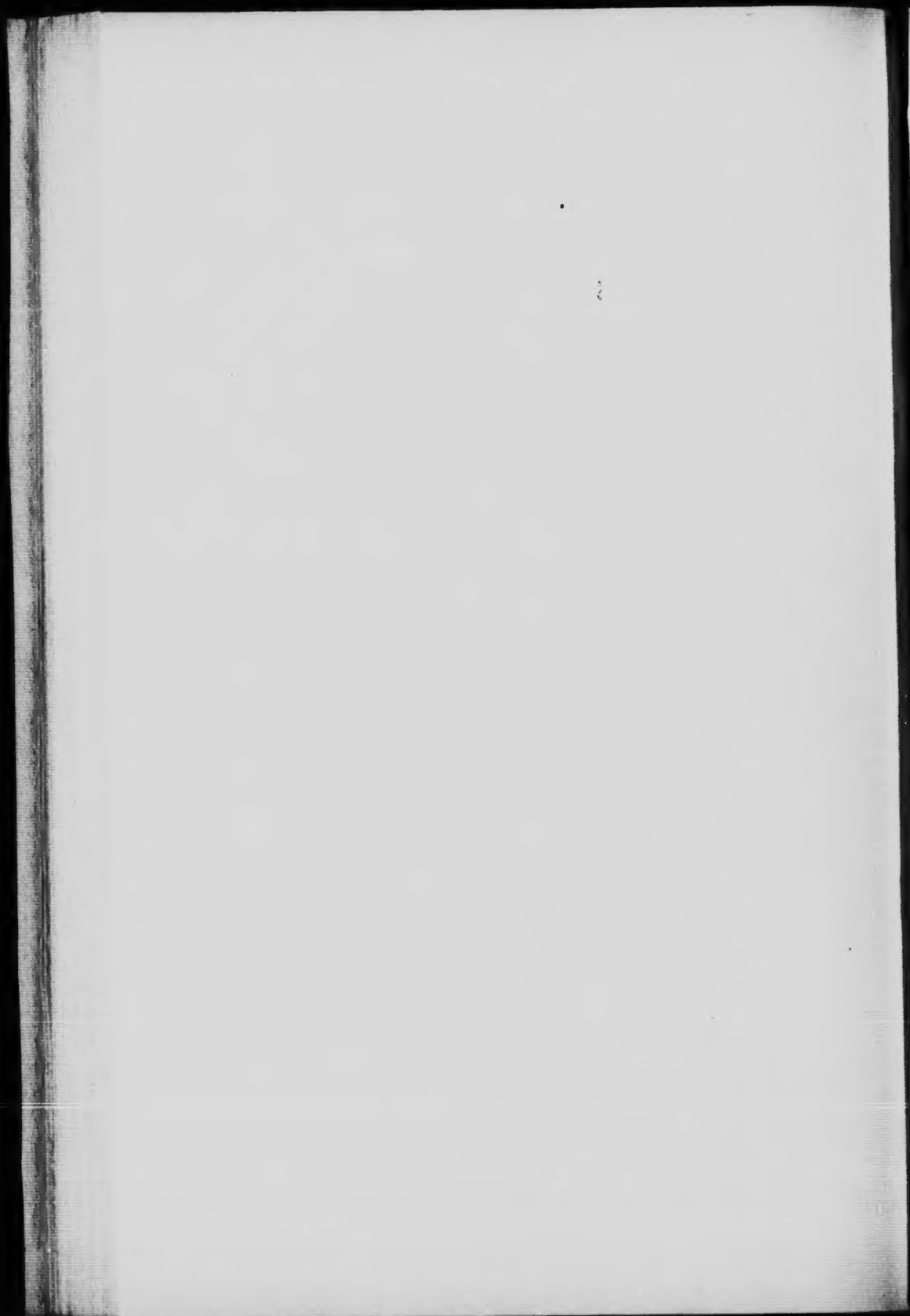
*The wood is very old and still,
So still when the dead cones fall,
Near in the vale or away on the hill,
You can hear them one and all,*

*And their falling wearies me;
If mine were the will of God,—O, then
The wood should tramp to the sounding sea,
Like a marching army of men !*

*But I dwell in the wood that is dark and kind,
Afar off tolls the main;
Afar, far off I hear the wind
And the roving of the rain.*



NOTES



NOTES

THE MISSION OF THE TREES

In the Ojibeway tongue "Wendigo" signifies an insane person with a homicidal mania and sometimes with a tendency to cannibalism.

THE FORSAKEN

This story is true. The fact may be of interest and value, perhaps, as proof of a well-known Indian characteristic, although the incident, as material for poetry, gains nothing in value from its truth. It was told me by the Hudson's Bay Company's factor at Nepigon House. "Tikanagan" is the Ojibeway word for the Indian cradle, about the construction and uses of which a little chapter might be written. Huskies are sledge dogs, a corruption of Eskimo.

DOMINIQUE DE GOURGUES

My attention was drawn to this story by my friend Dr. Pelham Edgar who was then working on "The Romance of Canadian History." He thought it a good subject for a ballad. Anyone so minded may compare the incidents given by Parkman with their development in the poem. But I read widely the noble books of the old navigators when I was writing it, and pored over many forgotten sailing charts and ancient maps. I conveyed one line from John Hawkins' account of his second voyage, but I will not say which as someone may be led thereby to read that and other publications of the Hakluyt Society, a very diverting business.

CATNIP JACK

The incidents in this ballad are imaginary; but a friend of mine once met two men drawing a dead body in the way described and shouting "Picotte" (smallpox) to warn the unsuspecting traveller. The ballad grew up around that fact and the psychology is natural enough, I think.

D. C. S.

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